1: Barnes

643
622
634

Ngoni FR5

[Category 643 is reserved for information pertaining to only the Paramount Chief and his activities; data on village chiefs or headmen will be found under category 622, while information on chiefs and other officials at the county or unstated intermediate level has been classified in category 634. --Analyst]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

According to Coxhead, an Administrative Officer who published in 1914, there were at that time six minor chiefs under the Paramount. Four of these minor chiefs were sons of Mpezeni I.[19] Other Administrative records of the same period refer to ten 'subdivisions'. The Paramount Chief and the chiefs now in charge of counties 4, 14, 15 and 17 are each described as the 'important chief' in their subdivisions. The important chief in another subdivision is now not a county chief. The remaining four subdivisions had two chiefs each. Five of these are now county chiefs, one is a Cewa chief, and the remaining two are no longer chiefs. The title 'chief' was, however, not applied consistently by the Administration at that time and men who are called chiefs in some documents are called divisional or group headmen in others. In 1920, with the appointment of two new divisional headmen all Ngoniland villages in Northern Rhodesia were divided between ten rulers, not all of whom were called chiefs. Mpezeni II was ruler of one group of villages and Paramount over all ten, and the other nine rulers were the predecessors of the present minor chiefs. These ten groups of villages, and the two corresponding groups in Nyasaland, I have called *counties*. With one exception, each successive county chief has taken the name of his predecessor and this name is often used as the name of the county.

4. *County segments*

In each county there is one village known as the important village or capital. Many, but not all, of the villages in a county belong to the residential segment of which the capital is the headquarters. Thus we may speak of a county segment which forms, as it were, the core of the county. The villages that do not belong to the county segment fall into three main types. There are villages belonging to other segments under Mpezeni, there are a few which trace their origin to other Ngoni groups, and there are those which have entered Ngoniland after 1898 and so never formed part of the segmentary residential system. Most villages of the last type have come into Ngoniland from Cewa chiefdoms and some of them claim to have been settled in Ngoniland before the arrival of Mpezeni and to have been driven out by him. An indication of the distribution of villages in Northern Rhodesia counties among these different types is given in Table IV, where the only three counties for which I have the information are examined from this point of view.

[19] Coxhead, *Native Tribes*, p. 22.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

In these three counties there were no instances of two other types of village found rarely in Ngoniland. Occasionally an immigrant labourer working on the Fort Jameson tobacco farms manages to attract sufficient followers from among other labourers and his local affines to found a new village in an Ngoni chiefdom. The other rare type of village is formed by direct administrative action. The Administration has been largely concerned to amalgamate existing villages rather than to create new ones. In at least one instance, however, scattered clusters of huts inhabited by people who had fled from several different villages to avoid coming under agricultural control have been united into a new village under a headman of their own choosing. One example of each of these rare types of village is included in the sample of villages analysed in Table VII (p. 133).

TABLE IV. ORIGIN OF VILLAGES IN SELECTED COUNTIES, 1948

	Number of villages in county, classified by origin				
County	*County segment*	*Other segment under Mpezeni*	*Other Ngoni groups*	*Other tribes, joining Ngoni after 1898*	*Total*
X	60 (72%)	4 (5%)	1 (1%)	18 (22%)	83 (100%)
Y	26 (55%)	10 (21%)	0 (0%)	11 (23%)	47 (100%)
Z	59 (70%)	16 (19%)	0 (0%)	9 (11%)	84 (100%)
Total	145 (68%)	30 (14%)	1 (0.5%)	38 (18%)	214 (100%)

Number of counties in Northern Rhodesia under Mpezeni 10
Number of villages in Northern Rhodesia under Mpezeni 540 approximately

It will be seen from Table IV that about two-thirds of the villages in each of the selected counties belong to their own county segment. It is to villages in this category that the ties of a county chief are strongest. Here old and new systems are in accord and the chief acts both as traditional lord of the segment as well as head of the Native Authority. Villages in their county segment appear to be

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

more meticulous than others in such matters as discussing proposed changes of site with the county chief and in reporting important deaths to him.

The proportion of villages in each county belonging to other segments under Mpezeni varies from 5 per cent to 21 per cent. These are villages which chose, or were forced, to move away from the chief to whom they were attached in segmentary terms, or else villages belonging to major segments whose lords did not become chiefs. Villages in this category have ties that in certain situations, as when there is a serious quarrel, link them more closely with some other county than with their own. In any county where there are many villages of this kind the solidarity of the county as a social group is not great. The ruling chief has many rivals who seek to divide his county and to become chiefs themselves. We must distinguish here between villages in one county which belong to the segment of another and those interloping villages which belong to one county but are situated in the territory of another. We shall discuss interloping villages later (p. 128) in connexion with the territorial aspect of counties.

In Nyasaland the history of administration has been separate from that of Northern Rhodesia, but the Ngoni population there also has divided itself on segmentary lines. For many years the two principal leaders recognized by the Administration have been the heads of segments 5 and 6, and these segments form the cores of the two counties they control. The two county chiefs are now Native Authorities and join with an adjacent Cewa chief to form the Fort Manning Council of Chiefs. This acts as the Native administrative body for the Fort Manning division of Lilongwe District.

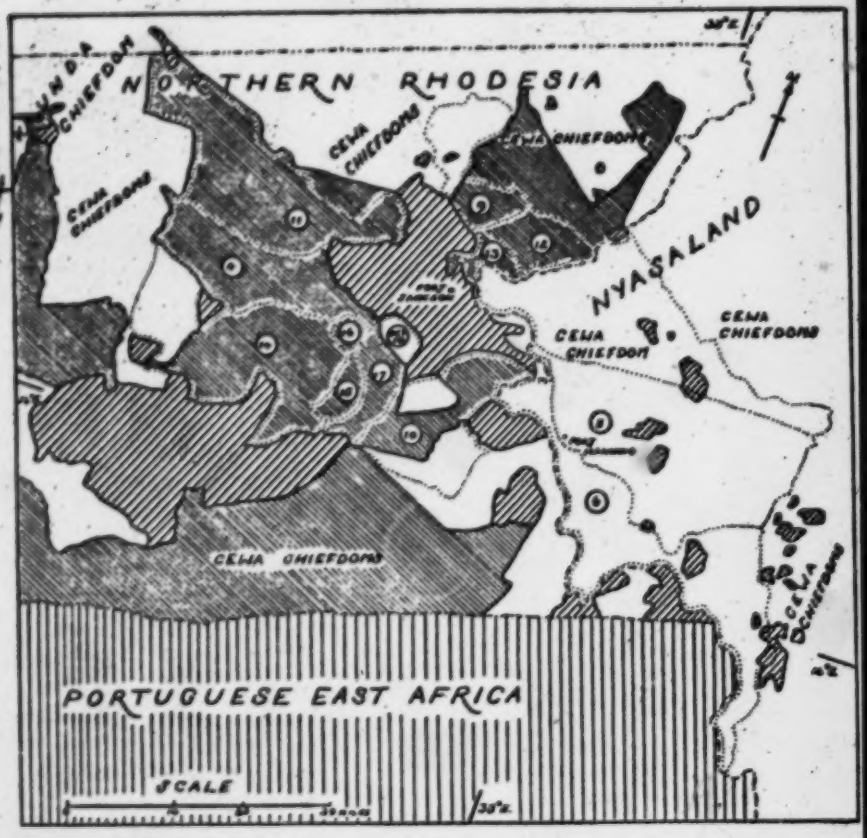
The geographical distribution of the twelve counties, the neighbouring chiefdoms of other tribes, and the tracts of alienated land are shown in Map D.

The twelve county segments, ten in Northern Rhodesia and two in Nyasaland, are, in the nomenclature of Chapter I, segments 4 to 6 and 9 to 17. We shall refer to counties in the same way by the numbers of the segments corresponding to them. Thus county 4 is the county whose segment is number 4, and so on. County 10 is the Paramount Chief's county. Some of the county segments are primal, others are residual segments left after the formation of primal segments of lower order. The definition of the segment associated with each county is indicated in Table V. This table merely restates information implicit in Diagram 1. The hereditary names of county chiefs are also given.

[Text continues on page 121]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Map D. STATUTORY DIVISION OF LAND, FORT JAMIESON 1949



102
423
631
439
634
101

International Boundary.

N. Charterland Concession, Northern Boundary.

Statutory Division Boundary.

County Boundary.

Farmland in non-African ownership.

Native Reserves.

Native Trust land, crown land and disputed land, treated as if it were Native Trust land.

Portuguese East Africa.

County numbers.

[p. 120]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

TABLE V. COUNTY SEGMENTS

631
634
621

County[1]	Specification of county segment	Hereditary name of county chief
4	Residual after formation of segments 9 to 12	Madzimawe
5	Primal	Zulu
6	Primal	Mlonyeni
9	Primal	Mnukwa
10(*a*)	Residual after formation of segments 13 to 15	Mpezeni [643]
11	Residual after formation of segment 16	Misholo
12	Primal	Mshawa
13	Primal	Kapatamoyo
14	Residual after formation of segment 17	Nzermane
15	Primal	Sayili
16	Primal	Teleka (*b*)
17	Primal	Maguya

(*a*) Paramount Chief's county.
(*b*) The first chief of this county was known as Mlonyeni. He was succeeded by his brother, who kept his own name of Teleka. The similarity of name with the chief of segment 6 was accidental.

[1] [County numbers refer to map on page 120, category 116 - Analyst]

The county segments are not all of the same order of segmentation, yet the counties occupy positions of equivalence in the Native Authority. Each of the eleven counties under minor chiefs is, or has been for most of the time, the area under the control of a Subordinate Native Authority and also the area of jurisdiction of [692] a second-class Native Court. According to the *Official Gazette* the [643] Paramount Chief's county appears not to have been under any Subordinate Native Authority, nor does it seem to have been provided with a second-class court, but in some respects action takes place as if there were such an authority and court. The Superior Native Authority is responsible for all ten counties in Northern Rhodesia and there is a first-class Native Court for the same area. Thus the structural alignment of the twelve counties is markedly different from that of the segments corresponding to them. In practice the relations existing between the twelve counties and

[Text continues on page 123]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

between their leaders are influenced by both their relative position in the Native Authority scheme and the position of the county segments, as well as by new interests that have emerged. The formal relationship between the alignments of segments and counties is set out in Diagram 4. This diagram also shows the relationship, at a higher level, between some of the other independent Ngoni groups and the major political divisions of British Africa.

In each county the chief, who does not live in the capital but in a village of his own, is head of the county segment and it seems probable that during the early years of the Administration it was the affiliation of villages within their old residential segments that provided the basis for the groupings of convenience which eventually crystallized into counties. In one or two instances succession to headship of the segment and county has been plainly manipulated, but the traditional rules of succession have not been outraged. Where the county segment is a residual one, the county chief may be also head of some segment of higher order. Thus the chief of county 11 is head of primal segment 11 although his county is only the residual segment after the formation of segment 16; county chief 14 is head of primal segment 14; and the Paramount Chief is head of primal segments 4 and 10.

---

[1] Three Ngoni groups stemming from Zwangendaba are not shown on this diagram.

(*a*) A group under Magodi separated itself from either segment 2 or 3 and is now settled in Lundazi District, Northern Rhodesia.

(*b*) A group led by Zulu Gama is now settled in Songea District, Tanganyika Territory. The segment corresponding to this group appears to have been formed within segment 1, but I do not know what relation it bears to the other segments nor by what process it was formed. The western part of this group is still led by a descendant of Zulu Gama, but a descendant of one of his associates named Mboanani now leads the eastern part.

(*c*) A group under Ciwele ndhlovu is settled in Dowa District, Nyasaland. Some writers say it was formed within segment 4, others within the residue of segment 1. He was a lieutenant of either Zwangendaba or Mpezeni.

The two Ngoni groups which do not stem from Zwangendaba cannot be fitted into the diagram. They are located as follows.

(*d*) The Southern Nyasaland Ngoni, who broke away from the Southern Rhodesia Ndebele and who were led originally by Mputa, are now settled in Ncheu and Dedza Districts, Nyasaland, and in Circunscracão of Angónia, District of Tete, Portuguese East Africa.

(*e*) The Ngoni group led by Soshangane are now settled in the lower Limpopo Valley, Gazaland, Portuguese East Africa.

There are a few small Ngoni groups in the Shire Valley, Nyasaland, some of which have their own minor chiefs. There are also many Ngoni men and women in the towns of southern and eastern Africa, but they are not organized into political groups on a tribal basis.

[These notes refer to the chart on page 122.—Analyst]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

5. *Relative status of Chiefs*

There was nothing inherent in the residential system which facilitated the emergence of twelve, and only twelve, counties from Mpezeni's people. Each major segment already had a large number of lesser segments within it in 1898, and it was during the unsettled years that followed the conquest, when new schemes of organization were tried out, when fresh occupants were sought for existing posts, and when the spatial distribution of people was being radically altered, that these twelve gradually emerged. Considerations of size do not seem to have been very important, for there is a wide variation in the size of counties. However, with the development of the Native Authority and Native Court, there is an upper limit to the size of the county which can be served adequately by a single court and possibly by a single minor chief, and this shows itself in the moves towards forming sub-counties within one or two of the larger ones. Yet in view of administrative attempts to do away with certain chiefs, it seems that in its eyes the Ngoni have too many rather than too few chiefs. The order of segmentation is not critical, as we have seen. Nor has there been merely an ossification of the formal structure as it was at the moment of conquest, as is often the case when a fluid society is suddenly put into a rigid mould. Wiese in 1891 wrote that Ngoniland was divided into four districts.[30] In our terms, these were as follows:

(*a*) Primal segment 11.
(*b*) Primal segment 14.
(*c*) Residual segment 10 after 14 was formed.
(*d*) Residual segment 4 after 10 and 11 were formed.

Of these four districts, the first has given rise to two counties, 11 and 16; the second to two, 14 and 17; the third to three, 10, 13 and 15; and the fourth to three, 4, 9 and 12. Wiese does not indicate in what districts he would place segments 5 and 6.

The fortuitous manner in which the counties have emerged is illustrated by the fact that for certain purposes one of the counties is treated as if it were two. At one time, when there were more administrative divisions than there are now, it was divided into two areas, and this arrangement still persists for tax collection. Other counties have only one tax register book each, but this one has two.

In genealogical terms also, the emergence of the twelve chiefs appears to have been fortuitous. For example, the second wife of Mpezeni I in segment 10, after the formation of segments 14 and 15,

[30] Wiese, 'Expedição', pp. 469-70.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

had one son who died unmarried. The heir of Mpezeni I next after Nsingu was, therefore, the eldest son of the third wife in segment 10. This man's position in segment 10 was, therefore, equivalent to that of the eldest son of the second wife in segment 14, who was the second heir in that segment. Of these two second heirs, the latter, in the less important segment, was able to establish himself as the chief of county 17 whereas the former, in the more important segment, succeeded merely in becoming a village headman. Similarly, some lieutenants managed to become chiefs, others of comparable status did not. Wiese mentions six lieutenants by name. One of these became a chief, the other five did not. The segments of two other lieutenants, not mentioned by Wiese, became county segments and one other lieutenant became chief in the county of his lady's segment.

The evidence, therefore, suggests that we must look upon this transition from one system to another as no simple procedure by which indigenous forms of organization are taken over largely unchanged by a colonial administration. The change from an isolated expanding system based on warfare to a large-scale quasi-static system based on subsistence production and migratory labour provided opportunities for advancement for those who could adapt themselves more quickly than their neighbours. In one sense the really significant change came not in 1898 but in the 1920s, when the pattern of alignment became fixed. In the intervening period Ngoni society was still fluid, and an ambitious man had hope of securing advancement even as he had in the old days before the conquest, even though that advancement was achieved by different means and in a different context. It was after the twelve counties had been fixed, when it became clear that no more chiefs were to be made, that social mobility declined. With a rapidly changing external environment it was unlikely that this static condition would last, and with the growth of the Native Authority bureaucracy a new opening presented itself. Recently there are indications that further openings for the ambitious are being provided in the formation of parishes and in other schemes of rural development. But there are no new chiefs, even as there are no new plumed warriors for them to lead in battle or on whose behalf they can intercede with the tribal ancestors. Leadership in a society of half-peasants, half-proletarians, is based on other interests.

The salaries of chiefs are determined at an annual budget meeting held by the District Officer and attended by the chiefs and a few other men. The general outline of the tribal budget is suggested by the Administration, but on items of interest, such as

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

465 634 648 personal emoluments, there is usually some discussion. Thus the relative amounts paid to each chief provide us with some indication of the importance attached to him by the Administration and his colleagues. The salaries paid in 1946 are set out in Table VI together with the number of villages in each county in 1938, the last year for which I have that information.

TABLE VI. SALARIES OF CHIEFS AND VILLAGES IN THEIR COUNTIES

County segment	*Number of villages in county*, 1938	*Salary of county chief in £s per annum*, 1946
[643] 10	87	120 (*a*)
14	101	97½
4	88	82½
11	77	67½
12	42	52½
17	35	37½
13	30	27 (*b*)
15	28	27 (*b*)
9	19	30
16	19	30
Total	526	571½
Mean	52.6	57.15

(*a*) Paramount Chief.
(*b*) Calculated from monthly rate. Both these chieftainships were vacant for part of 1946.

It will be seen that the amount of a minor chief's salary is closely correlated with the number of villages in his county. The chiefs of counties 13 and 15 appear to be underpaid in relation to the number of their villages, and this may be related to efforts which the Administration had been making about that time to eliminate these two chieftainships and to amalgamate their chiefdoms with others. This arrangement also conforms to the alignment of segments. [643] The Paramount Chief is in charge of county 10 but he is also head of primal segment 4 which includes all the others, and it is therefore appropriate that he should be paid most. Chief 14 is

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

paid more than 17, as befits the fact that segment 14 contains segment 17, and similarly 11 is paid more than 16.

From another point of view we see that the sizes of the counties, in terms of the number of villages, are in accord with the segmentary alignment, although here we have to remember that we are dealing not with the county segments, residual or primal, but with the counties themselves, each containing villages from many segments. Yet despite this complication, it remains true that the status of a chief, as measured by the number of villages he controls, is in conformity with his position in the segmentary residential system. It may well be that during the early administrative period fortune favoured those leaders whose *de facto* following was in agreement with their position in the old political system. The use of hereditary names emphasizes the connexion of the minor chiefs of to-day with the pre-conquest State and to some extent reflects their traditional alignment. Apart from county 16, where the hereditary name changed when a chief was succeeded by his brother, all the hereditary names refer to the first holders of the chieftainship, though not necessarily to the first leader of the county segment. Thus, for example, segment 5 was founded by Lomapela, brother of Zwangendaba. When the British Administration began, segment 5 was led by Zulu, a son's son of Lomapela. Zulu was recognized as a chief by the Administration, and the name Zulu has been adopted by the two chiefs, his sons, who have succeeded in turn. Similarly, segment 15 was founded for the lady Kukuya Kupili twala, a wife of Ntutu Mpezeni I. Her eldest son, Sayili, was recognized by the Administration as a chief, and this name has been inherited by his son and son's son who have succeeded him as county chief.

We should not infer from the conformity between the position of chiefs in modern and traditional terms that the present system is maintained solely by values surviving from before the conquest. This is plainly not the case. Our point here is that in this particular respect traditional values do not clash with those of the new order.

6. *Counties as territorial units*

We have seen that during the period of migration there were no lasting boundaries, and that political allegiance outlasted changes in geographical location. This state of affairs continued for some time after the conquest. The moves that were made were much shorter than in previous times, but the same principle applied. From 1900 to 1930 many villages moved from one site to another as land was alienated to Whites, as the boundaries of proposed

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

reserves were amended, and as existing gardens were exhausted. Movement of this kind did not greatly affect political allegiance, so that not all the villages acknowledging the control of a minor chief were built in his vicinity. Coxhead mentions seven defined territorial units in 1914, but by the time I began fieldwork in 1946 their boundaries had been forgotten.[21] Most of the villages in any one county were clustered together, with the capital village and the chief's village somewhere in the middle of the cluster, but there were also more distant villages situated among those belonging to other counties. The next stage of development appears to have been the definition of county boundaries, so that by 1946 it was possible to speak of some villages as situated in one county and owing allegiance to another. Most of these interloping villages, as we may call them, belonged to the segment of the county to which they owed allegiance. They were a bone of contention between chiefs, for although each chief desires as many villages as possible under his control, he has only a limited amount of land in his county with which to satisfy his people. An analogous situation is found in some Welsh sheep farms, where each farmer likes to own as many sheep as possible but hopes they will graze on someone else's land. The chief in political control of an interloping village endeavoured to maintain his control at a distance and at the same time to make use of the land in the local chief's county, while the latter had to decide between trying to make the interloping village shift its allegiance so as to increase his own following and trying to get it to move away so as to give his people more land. In 1947 and 1948, to avoid such difficulties between chiefs, the Administration defined county boundaries precisely and insisted that all villages within the area of a county should be under the control of the county chief.

Thus, in the development of the county as a social group, ties of segmentary affiliation have been gradually replaced by those of territorial propinquity. This replacement is not yet complete, nor has it arisen merely as a consequence of Administrative action in the last few years. Village histories show that in many instances a village changed from attachment to the head of its major segment to attachment to the local county chief many years ago and without prompting from the Administration. Villagers marry their neighbours irrespective of county affiliation and thus build up ties which link them to the local county. It may be inconvenient to walk a long way to the court and county meetings of a distant chief, particularly if the local chief appears to listen more readily to his people's complaints and advice.

[21] Coxhead, *Native Tribes*, pp. 22, 24.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

7. *Villages*

Throughout Ngoni history the village has been an easily recognizable residential unit. Many of the pre-conquest villages, particularly those which were headquarters of major segments, were large clusters of huts with thousands of inhabitants. Although there are none of comparable size to-day, the concept of the village remains. The bulk of the present Ngoni rural population live in discrete clusters of huts housing between fifty and two hundred people. These we call villages. Each village is spatially distinct from the next, and generally is surrounded by garden land and bush.

The post of headman of a single village has never been very important in the scheme of administration. Under the 1903 scheme, district headmen were appointed in charge of groups of villages. After 1916 this term was dropped in favour of minor chief, sub-chief or headman of a group of villages. The men referred to by these names were the people who became county chiefs. Below them no individuals were appointed as leaders of social groups. From at least 1904 onwards there were men called district messengers who carried ornamental spears as badges of office and who carried out the instructions of the Native Commissioner. They had the functions of policemen and messengers, although some of them were heads of villages in their own right. In 1916, the title of these men was changed to divisional headmen, and they were described as being heads of groups of villages. Nevertheless, at least among the Ngoni, most divisional headmen continued to act merely as messengers and police, and leadership of groups of villages continued to rest with the variously styled minor chiefs. After 1929 the work of divisional headmen was taken over partly by the Native Authority messengers and partly by land messengers, who are Government (Boma) messengers sent to live rurally from time to time.

Yet although the office of village headman has not been of Administrative significance, the village has always been an important social group. We have seen that even in pre-conquest times, when the State as a whole was much more concentrated spatially than it is now, the fact of common residence was of significance within the segmentary residential system. The village had a central cattle byre. Its headman was known by a special term and once a primal segment had grown to village size the segment name was not applied to any residual segment within the headquarters village. The policy of the Administration, combined with a change in kinship relations among the tribe (a change from the quasi-

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

178
621 agnation of the small segments to what I have termed an omni-
648 directional system), has increased the importance of the single
[601] village. After 1898 the Administration endeavoured to bring the people back into villages of moderate size which could be easily supervised by the Administration acting through chiefs.[22] In 1912 a comprehensive scheme of Native reserves was proposed. To facilitate the introduction of the scheme, many small villages were amalgamated with others near by to form units of forty huts or more. The larger groups of composite villages were to form the nuclei of the reserves.[23] After 1930, when villages began to spread out again, many of the enforced amalgamations came to an end. The Administrative rules that every man must live in a recognized village and that a village with less than ten tax-paying men could not be recognized were not always enforced, although they were not repealed until 1945. Administrative recognition has been an important consideration in determining the size of villages but it has not been the only one.

621 In the residential system, the process of segmentation did not
681 stop with the founding of the segments we now know as county
178 segments. Already in 1898 there were very many more segments in being than the few we have shown in Diagram 1. There we have indicated the position of the major branches of the tree of State but have omitted the hundreds of minor limbs and thousands of twigs which made up the whole. Even if we restrict our attention to segments founded before 1898 we find within any county segment to-day many smaller groups, some of them divisions, others single villages, and a few containing several villages, which are in fact inferior segments formed by one or other of the processes we discussed in Chapter I. Lieutenants and others have made their own segments, junior sons have left their natal villages, and so on. The processes of segment formation since 1898 have not been identical with those prevailing before the conquest, for the quasi-agnatic structure of segments has been modified and segments of recent formation, if in fact we can legitimately call them segments at all, are not organized in the same hierarchical manner as in the old residential system. We shall discuss the formation of small social groups in a later part of our study, the analysis of village life.
178 Here, at the county level, we have to deal with what is essentially a
634 continuation of a pre-conquest process. Each successive head of a
622 county segment, i.e. each county chief, has formed his own new segment within that of his predecessor. Thus, for instance, where

[22] *Reports on the Administration*, 1902, p. 2, and 1903, p. 2.
[23] *M.R.A.*, p. 108.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

the reigning chief is the grandson of the founder of the county segment, there is one minor segment founded by his father within which he has founded his own segment. In counties where there have been more than three successive heads of the segment, there will be more than one segment intervening between the county segment and that of the reigning chief. With the decline in polygyny, most chiefs have had only one bevy of wives or even a single wife, so that they have been each able to found only one segment. It will be convenient to speak of 'chief's segment' for a segment founded by a reigning chief, and of 'regal segment' for a segment founded by a former chief. With this nomenclature, each chief's segment becomes regal on the death of its founder.

This terminology links up with our use of the terms *regal* and *chief's villages*, as I have defined them elsewhere.[24] The headquarters of a regal segment is a regal village, and the headquarters of a chief's segment is a chief's village. Similarly the headquarters of a county segment is a capital village.

In general we may refer to capital, regal and chief's villages collectively as royal villages, for they represent the chieftainship, and the history of the State, as against the diverse particular interests represented by the villages led by commoners. Four minor chiefs are, however, not agnatic descendants of Zwangendaba, and we can call their segments and villages royal only with qualification. Two of these four chiefs use the royal descent-name, and they all generally ally themselves with their royal colleagues. Yet there are many Ngoni in these pseudo-royal counties, particularly true agnatic descendants of Zwangendaba or of regional governors, who are scornful of the royal pretensions of their county chiefs.

Some of the junior kinsmen of Zwangendaba became leaders of independent Ngoni groups. None of the junior sons of Mpezeni I became independent leaders but some of them or their descendants did become county chiefs. None of the junior sons of Nsingu or Mpezeni II became chiefs and under the present system none of them is likely to do so. Nevertheless they founded segments, and this has happened in every junior line. In each county, as well as the county, regal and chief's segments, whose founders have been on the direct line of succession to the chieftainship, there are also segments founded by junior members of the chiefly house. These we shall term *cadet segments* and the headquarters of a cadet segment a *cadet village*.

[24] Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 204-6. In an earlier publication, 'Political development', p. 106, I used the adjective *private* in place of *regal* and *chief's*.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

divination are not well developed among the Ngoni as means of influencing action. The attempt to establish a new county failed for lack of Administrative support. Chiefs still continue to express their rivalries through sorcery, and would-be chiefs still attempt to establish new counties.

When Mpezeni II died, his heir was still young and was out of the country at boarding-school. A minor chief, after quarrelling with one of the dead chief's lieutenants about the funeral arrangements, proposed that the heir should remain at school to finish his education and that meanwhile there should be a regency. However the Administration arranged for the immediate return of the heir.

The rivalry between the Paramount Chief and his minor chiefs shows itself in other less dramatic ways. Thus the Paramount Chief's advisers told me that all cases coming on appeal from the courts of minor chiefs were heard in the Paramount Chief's own court of first instance, and that only if the verdict given there was not accepted was the case referred to the Appeal Court which was held at the administrative centre of the Paramount Chief's county every month. The minor chief's and their advisers told me that cases sent on appeal from them went direct to the Native Appeal Court, and emphasized that this court was composed of several minor chiefs and their councillors, called upon in rotation. In practice, as I observed in the course of my work, sometimes one procedure was followed, sometimes the other.

On the other hand, the minor chiefs and other politically important people support the Paramount Chief in his relations with the Administration. When recently Ngoni thought that the Administration was not treating the Paramount Chief with the respect due to his position, two minor chiefs endeavoured to organize a petition to the Administration on the matter. When the Paramount Chief's deputy was put in prison by the Administration for embezzlement, it was a minor chief who protested most strongly to the Administration. However dissatisfied the minor chiefs and people may be with any particular Paramount Chief, there is little dissatisfaction with the Paramount Chieftainship. This is still the feature of their organization which in Ngoni eyes most clearly marks them off from their neighbours, and which most clearly links them in their present lowly condition to the exploits of their illustrious forefathers.

3. *The chief's advisers*

The men who advise the chief, who enjoy his confidence and his hospitality, belong to a number of different categories. In each

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

county the senior lieutenants of the county segment are well-known figures, usually headmen of large villages, and often seen at the chief's house. There are also the lieutenants of the segments of lower order founded for their great wives by successive heads of the county segment, and in particular the lieutenants of the reigning chief's great wife's segment. There are individuals who for some reason or other have become friendly with the chief, and there are those occupying posts paid by the Native Treasury. There are the kinsmen of the chief, including the chief's deputy. All these categories contribute to the circle round the chief which keeps him informed of what is going on in his county, advises him what he should do and travels with him on journeys. The constitution of this group is not fixed and there is no formal council to which persons definitely do or do not belong. An Administrative officer once asked Mpezeni II who constituted the tribal council, and the Paramount Chief is said to have found difficulty in thinking of any names. Not all the people who might be expected to advise the chief do so, for there are always quarrels and preferences within each category. In particular, the lieutenants of regal segments seem to play a comparatively minor part. They do not represent the interests of the county as a whole, as do the lieutenants of the county segment, nor of the reigning chief, as do the lieutenants of his own village. They are the favourites of former chiefs and the segments that they represent are not functionally significant under the present scheme of administration.

In recent years the Administration has endeavoured from time to time to discuss affairs with the chiefs and the four newly appointed Native Authority councillors in isolation from the rest of the tribe.[4] In most situations in which matters of common interest are discussed there is, however, no restriction on who can offer advice to the chief or to the meeting. Any man can stand up and say what he wishes, but unless he is in an important social position people will listen to him attentively only if his counsel seems sound.[5]

It is the custom for a chief to nominate one of his agnatic kinsmen, usually a father's son or father's brother's son, as his deputy.[6] Although this appears to have been a traditional post, I do not know what role was played by an important man's deputy in pre-conquest times. Nowadays the deputy of a chief may help in his various official duties and represents the interests of the chief's agnatic kin as against those of his lieutenants. In village affairs

[4] See p. 151.
[5] See pp. 158*f*.
[6] *Mnawe*. cf. Zulu *umnawe*, younger sibling.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

the post of deputy is still of significance,[7] but in the life of the county the chief's deputy does not play a great part. One man appointed as chief's deputy went to Southern Rhodesia but no one has been appointed in his place and the chief manages without a deputy.

Another traditional post which still functions is that of chief's messenger.[8] This post is quite distinct from that of district messenger who is an employee of the Administration, and of Native Authority messenger. The district messengers and Native Authority messengers are full-time civil servants, while the chief's messengers are only called upon from time to time and are not paid. The county chief nominates one man for each cluster of half a dozen villages or so in his county to be responsible for informing the village headmen in his cluster of forthcoming county meetings and royal hunts. Sometimes a man who has been nominated accepts his post reluctantly, but it is difficult for him to refuse, and an ambitious man may welcome the appointment for the contact it gives him with his chief.

The royal descent-name *jere* is held by all patrilineal descendants of Zwangendaba's father and by the patrilineal descendants of various other people who were given the name by Zwangendaba or Mpezeni I.[9] Only two county chiefs do not bear this name. People who do not hold it regard all those who do as kinsfolk of the Paramount Chief, and from time to time in the appointment of men to office, the common people have insisted that not all the posts should go to men bearing this name. The Administration has regarded all men named *jere* in the same way, and in its efforts to counter nepotism has made similar stipulations. A simple dichotomy of this kind overlooks the divisions within the royal house and between the agnatic kinsmen of the Paramount Chief and those who have acquired the name by other means. Distant agnatic relationship may imply less identity of interest than close non-agnatic ties. Nevertheless the appointment of councillors and others with non-royal descent names does assist the notion that the people as well as the chief have interests in the common good and share the responsibility of pursuing it.

From time to time efforts are made to create new chieftainships. We have already mentioned one attempt.[10] The initiative comes usually from the junior kinsman of a chief to whom he has

[7] See my 'Village headman', pp. 100-6.

[8] *Lisuus*. cf. Zulu *i(li)*ɮuɮu, messenger sent by a king or chief.

[9] See Bruwer, *Mbiri*, p. 23, for the categories of persons bearing the royal descent name.

[10] See p. 140*f*.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

634 668 delegated a certain amount of responsibility, such as the collection of licence fees or the holding of a court not recognized by the Administration but supplied by the county clerk with the apparatus of official forms. The would-be chief then argues that the rural district in which he lives has always been distinct from the rest of the county and that it is too far for the people in it to attend at the county court. No attempt of this kind since 1920 has been successful, although the recent dispersal of villages into reopened land outside [693] the reserves has increased the distances some litigants have to travel to the county court, and hence the number of disputes referred to these unrecognized local leaders has increased.

4. *The chief and his people*

634 The chief interacts with his people in a variety of situations. He receives their presents of beer and other valuables, he presides at county meetings, and organizes the royal hunts. He visits them in their villages when there are important celebrations and festivities and they go to him with their requests and complaints.

634 574 273 [554] Ngoni offer beer as one of their principal expressions of hospitality, and in a formal beer party the ordered pattern of the social structure is acted out in the distribution and dispensation of the various jars and bowls of beer.[11] One traditional obligation is to provide a jar of beer for the head of the segment. Everyone belongs, or belonged, to a hierarchy of segments so that there were many people who ought to be honoured in this way at every party. In practice, since beer is heavy to carry, few jars move outside the village in which they are brewed, but a distant political superior is sometimes called in to a village to attend a beer party at which he will be honoured in this way. In the chief's own village the chief lives close at hand and beer is provided in much the same way as for the headman in an ordinary village. When beer is brewed by important people in the capital and regal villages they often call the chief to come and visit them and enjoy their hospitality. The chief is not so frequently called to beer in commoner villages, but on an important occasion such as the formal installation of a village official, or the formal announcement that a village has moved to a new site, it is appropriate to invite the chief to attend. A chief may 634 also be honoured by his affines with beer brewed for him in the 554 same way as any other man, but there is some disagreement about the appropriateness of this, for the chief 'has exceeded all others'

[11] See Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 217-19, for the rules of and attitudes towards beer drinking.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

and is not to be treated as if he were the mere husband of a kinswoman. Indeed, all marital affairs of chiefs tend to have political significance; they are much discussed in the tribe and are the particular concern of senior lieutenants of counties. A recent incident illustrates how in relations with his affines a chief is bound by the instructions of his political advisers. A chief hit his wife while drinking beer in her brother's house. Her father reprimanded him. At a meeting held to discuss the quarrel, the county lieutenants and a kinsman of the chief, his father's deputy, ordered the woman's father to pay two beasts to the chief. The chief himself said nothing. A week or so later the man offered the beasts to the chief who said he did not want them. Just over a year later the chief's kinsman complained to the chief that the beast[12] had not been paid. The chief replied that he did not want the cattle and that at the meeting he had wanted his wife's father to be merely cautioned. His kinsman said that despite this he would call the lieutenants who had taken the original decision and get them to ask the woman's father why he had not paid. Hearing this, the man offered a beast which was accepted.[13]

Thus it is the chief in his position as head of a major segment and a county who is honoured with beer and whose marriages are protected, and not the chief as a bibulous aristocrat. The chief himself does not drink all, or even any, of the beer presented to him but he is responsible for dispensing it. A chief who acts like a commoner and wanders through his villages seeking beer risks the reprimands of his lieutenants, for it is difficult to refuse a chief beer under those conditions. A chief should not visit his people's villages unless they invite him, or unless he has at least warned them of his intention.

The gifts received by a chief from returned labour migrants are sometimes cited as a modern form of tribute, but while these presents may be more expensive in pecuniary terms than beer, they do not have the same great social importance. The shirt or hat presented by a man recently back from Southern Rhodesia may bring him favourable attention from the chief, but the present is made by an individual and arises from his own political aspirations. So far as I could tell, such presents are not effective as bribes. On the other hand, the presentation of beer is an affirmation of a relationship between a social group, often a village or division, and a political office, and most of those affected directly

[12] At the meeting two beasts were asked for, but a year later only one beast was mentioned.

[13] cf. Barnes, *Marriage*, for the political significance of affinal ties.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

487
516
648

PLATE IV. Villagers hoeing a path to another village in preparation for a visit from the District Officer.

648
634
342
516
137

PLATE V. A District Officer, with a county chief on his left, talks to village headmen during a tour of villages. In the distance are villagers listening to the conversation.

[Facing p. 145]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

by this relationship participate in the presentation and consumption of the beer.

The religion of the Ngoni before the conquest was a cult of the Paramount Chief's ancestors. This cult has disappeared and all public religious activities are now conducted by members of the various Christian denominations, Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed Church Mission, Anglican (U.M.C.A.), Seventh Day Adventist, and Watch Tower. There are a few adherents of other Christian sects who do not have churches in the Fort Jameson area and there are a few Moslems. There is little evidence to show how much the disappearance of the tribal religion has altered relations between the chief and his people. Most chiefs have some connexion with one or other mission, attend mission services from time to time and send their children to mission schools. The evangelists, deacons and elders of the churches act as leaders of the community in certain situations, particularly at funerals. Advancement within the ecclesiastical organization can be an alternative route to high status, but in most secular matters church leaders do not rival the chiefs. In church, chiefs are treated with respect and given seats of honour, while tribal and county meetings are usually opened with prayers led by a catechist or elder of the denomination to which the chief is attached.

The sanctions which people can use against their chiefs are diffuse rather than organized. If the conduct of a chief is regarded as outrageous, the senior lieutenants of his county segment and other traditionally important people may hold a small meeting in the chief's village and there rebuke him for his misbehaviour. If the chief has offended against one of his people, say by striking him, the lieutenants may tell the chief to pay a beast to the wronged man as damages. If it is a minor chief who is involved, the Paramount Chief is sometimes told of the matter and calls the minor chief to his village to reprimand or caution him. A chief who flouted the instructions of his lieutenants or Paramount in matters of this kind would lose a great deal of the support of his people on which his position ultimately depends. The common people themselves cannot take much direct action against a chief of whose actions they disapprove, but they can gradually drift away from him into other counties and they can refrain from sending him gifts of beer or from answering his calls for labour, and they may show their disapproval by not saluting him in the traditional manner. The Paramount Chief alone is saluted with the word 'Baiyete',[14] a salutation which symbolizes his former position as head of an

[14] cf. Zulu *bayede*.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

independent group of Ngoni. Chibambo mentions how the use of this salutation was discontinued when the head of an erstwhile independent group rejoined his parent group.[15] In recent times people have indicated their disapproval of the Paramount Chief's actions by discontinuing this salutation temporarily.

Despite the security of tenure provided by Administrative recognition, a chief still needs the support of his people. There is an Ngoni maxim, 'chieftainship is people',[16] and commoners are well aware that it is because they support their chief that he has high status. The simplest and most effective sanction that commoners can employ against their chief is to leave him. Movement from one county to another, from one tribe to another, and from the county to the town and back again is crucial in the working of modern Ngoni society. Not all these movements take place as the result of the unpopularity of chiefs, but this is one factor among many. Chibambo records an early example of people moving to segment 8 from the residue of segment 1 in order to share the hospitality of a newly appointed chief, but he goes on to say 'afterwards they found it wise to return to their proper division [segment]'.[17] In more recent times there are several examples, particularly among villages which entered Ngoniland after 1898 and who therefore largely lack segmental affiliation, of villages and clusters that have changed from one county to another for political reasons. More significant at the present time are the numbers of ambitious people who emigrate to the towns because, among other things, they cannot find advancement in the political hierarchy. The most striking instance of this is in the family of the late Mpezeni II. He had six sons who survived him. One is now Paramount Chief, and one is still a boy. The other four, including the chief's deputy, are town-dwellers in other parts of Africa.

5. *Royal hunts*

The royal hunt is the only occasion on which a county, or more usually a rural district or part of a county, functions as an economic unit. Even then the economic element in the enterprise is not very marked. The chief announces, through his messengers, that on such-and-such a day he will hold a royal hunt and that the men of such-and-such villages are to meet in a certain place. The procedure followed on the hunt is exactly the same as on an ordinary hunt, with the chief or someone nominated by him in tactical command, though the number of hunters is greater than on a hunt

[15] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 56. [16] *Ufumu ni abantu.*
[17] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 35.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

organized by a commoner. All the animals killed belong to the chief and must be taken to him. He then usually rewards the men who killed and carried the animals with part of the meat. There is thus a difference from commoner hunts, on which the animals belong to those who kill and carry them and not to the man in charge of the hunt. Whereas on a commoner hunt some men usually lose interest and drop out during the chase, this is less likely to happen on a royal hunt. A commoner, even if he is a headman, cannot force his neighbours to come with him on a hunt, but occasionally if the field is very poor a chief will summon absentees in his court.

These royal hunts appear to be of social rather than economic significance. Big game is scarce in Ngoniland, and a hunt attended by two hundred men may sometimes yield as few as half a dozen antelope. Ngoni like to eat game meat, but they do not regard hunting as an activity in which game should be killed as effectively as possible. They scorn the much more efficient methods employed by the Cewa, illegal though they are in the eyes of the Administration. An Ngoni lad was once ordered by his village headman to attend me on a hunt in which we used nets in Cewa fashion. The lad was sulky throughout the hunt and made no effort to kill any animals. A few days later we went hunting again, this time employing Ngoni techniques. We tramped many miles on a very hot day and killed nothing at all, and yet he appeared to have thoroughly enjoyed himself. Royal hunts must be seen in this light. A chief can no longer command a regiment of soldiers but he can call out his men hunting.[18] Men attend because they consider it their duty to do so and because they are aware of the sanctions at the chief's disposal.

Royal hunts are sometimes of practical importance, when there are lions to be hunted. Lions appear in Ngoniland sporadically, apparently on passage between the game reserve on the Nyasaland side of the border and the sparsely inhabited Luangwa Valley. Hunters like to be in strength when tackling lion, and the men of a county look to their chief to call a royal hunt to deal with them. Chiefs are relatively well supplied with guns, and the combination of many hunters armed with spears and a few guns gives confidence.

6. *African bureaucracies*

Prior to the recognition of Native Courts in 1929 there was little specialization in the functions of the various indigenous leaders supported by the Administration. All of them, chief, sub-

[18] See my 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', p. 215, for Ngoni hunting methods.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

The tenure of a chief is very secure. Unless the chief is found guilty of some crime serious in the eyes of the Administration or unless there is serious disaffection in his county which gains Administrative support, a chief remains a chief for life. For the last fifty years the Administration has complained that Ngoni chiefs are inefficient and unco-operative, yet the number of instances in which a chief has been deposed is very small. I could discover only one clear instance. This security is not enjoyed by other Native Authority employees. Clerks who are found to have embezzled public money lose their posts even as they are punished in the Administration's courts, but the impetus to remove the occupant of a post comes usually from the Ngoni themselves and not from the Administration. Assessors and others who offend their chief are usually dismissed, while at a county meeting men may raise complaints against the actions of an office holder which, if sufficiently sustained, may result in the chief's dismissing him.

The secure tenure of the chiefs derives in part from the acceptance by the Administration that their posts are hereditary. It is interesting to note that some holders of less important and more recently created posts are saying that their sons should succeed them.

Table VIII (p. 152) shows clearly the kinds of activities that come within the control of the Native Authority. It does not show the whole range of social services which affect the Ngoni, for education is largely paid for by the Central Government and largely administered by the missions, while the Administration itself handles a wide variety of services, such as agricultural instruction, control of labour, maintenance of main roads, postal services, and very many more. The Administration endeavours to supervise contracts between Africans and non-Africans, and retains for its own courts the right to deal with disputes between Africans and non-Africans. Ngoni participate with other tribes as political groups only within the framework of institutions supervised by the Administration, such as the African Provincial Council of the Eastern Province. The Ngoni Native Authority is in fact, like any other Native Authority, a local government body to which certain functions have been delegated completely by the Central Government, and which for other functions relies partly or wholly on skilled or specialized services provided for it by the centre. The Paramount Chief is hereditary chairman of a rural district council, representing the interests of his peasants to the central authority and representing it to them.

However this analogy of local government is only partly correct, for the society in which Ngoni now live is not a homo-

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

7. *Capital, court and chief's village*

● 634 We have spoken of the headquarters of the county segment as the capital of the county, and this is in accord with vernacular usage. Although each chief is head of his county segment, no chief lives in his capital village. Each has made his segment and set up a village of his own. This process continues with each successive chief, each making his own new village. When brick buildings [344] were made during the 1930s to house the newly recognized Native Courts, these were located near the villages of the reigning chiefs. Some of these are still in office, while others have died and their successors live in their new villages, some of which are as much as two miles away from the court. There are thus in some counties three foci of political interest. There is the capital village, the court, and the chief's village. Associated with each centre are different leaders and different activities. The capital village provides a link with the past, and in particular with that moment in the past at which the segment was founded. The Paramount Chief [643] retains special rights in his capital village and can make a garden for one year on the old site of his county capital whenever it moves to a new one. Most, if not all, capital villages are larger than the average village but the senior lieutenants of the county segments do not live in them, for like the chiefs, they have made their own villages. Nevertheless, the lieutenants who do live in the capital [554] are regarded as people of considerable importance in the county. Meetings are sometimes held in the capital but more frequently at the county court or in the chief's village. The court is the home of 692 the Native Authority, and it is there that the affairs of the Adminis- 648 tration are discussed. An incident well illustrates the association of 634 the court with the Administration. I once called at the house of a 647 county chief who had not previously met me. He insisted that I should go to the court to meet him there, as that was where he always met Administrative officials. County meetings are called at the court to discuss matters raised by the Administration in its letters to chiefs, and to formulate requests and complaints for transmission to the Administration. The court clerk, the Native Authority councillors, assessors, and messengers are much in evidence, while the traditional advisers of the chief, his senior lieutenants, may be in the background even if they are not silent. Meetings of this kind are usually called by county chiefs, but occasionally a meeting may be held open to the whole tribe. I have described elsewhere the procedure at a county meeting.[22]

[22] Barnes, 'Political development', pp. 107-9.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

In contrast to this, the private affairs of the chieftainship, matters connected with royal cattle, disputes among the chief's wives and quarrels between the chief and his affines or close supporters are discussed at the chief's village. Quarrels of an apparently trivial nature, such as a chief's wife's running away with a lorry driver, would in the old days have threatened the whole internal structure of the county segment, and they are still treated as questions of State by the lieutenants and kinsmen of the chief who attend these meetings. The contrast between these two kinds of assembly is striking. They are described by different vernacular terms,[26] and while any man can attend and speak at a meeting at the court, it would be considered inappropriate for him to intervene in a meeting at the chief's village unless his position in the old residential system was a high one. Women listen to court meetings, but rarely if ever speak, for the Administration works very largely through men and it is men who discuss the kinds of thing in which the Administration is interested. At the chief's village, the interests of the chief's kinswomen and wives are often directly concerned and they themselves contribute to the discussion. The marriages of chiefs established, and to a lesser extent do still reinforce and establish, affinal ties which cut across the cleavages between segments and which were crucial to the balance of power within the State. A quarrel between a chief and his wife was a matter of political, and not merely domestic, significance and must therefore be discussed by the chief's political advisers.

The sanction of deportation appears to be employed only in connexion with offences against the chieftainship. Thus a lieutenant who embezzled some royal cattle was called before a meeting at his chief's village attended by the important lieutenants in the county, and ordered to leave the country. Similarly, a man who was found drinking with a chief's wife under suspicious circumstances was ordered to leave the country by a tribunal of this kind. He moved first to another county, but was forced to move on again out of Ngoniland. Such actions are sometimes taken without reference to recognized Native Courts or to the Administration, and the effectiveness of the tribunal's decision depends on the support it has from the people as a whole and from the Native Authority organization rather than on the ultimate sanctions wielded by the Administration. However, when matters of this

[26] A meeting to discuss matters of general interest is *umukhosi*; one to discuss affairs of the chieftainship is *bumenene*. cf. *ku-somkhosa*, to assemble (Nyanja) and *i(li)lembe*, assembly (Zulu). The different derivation of the words, from Nyanja and Zulu, is significant. *Lumenene* also means age-set.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

kind are referred to the Administration, it may sometimes act in the way desired by the chief and his lieutenants. Thus a chief once discovered his wife in bed with a lover. The man was eventually caught, and there were some who urged that he be hanged right away, for no one would tell the Administration about the matter. However, more cautious counsels prevailed, the incident was referred to the Administration, and the man was sentenced, in accordance with the wishes of the chiefs and their lieutenants, to three months' imprisonment. On his release, he was escorted from Ngoniland by a chief. Later the man returned, only to be driven out again. The Administration is concerned with upholding the position of chiefs, and in situations of this kind may regard, say, adultery with a chief's wife as more heinous that with a commoner's wife. On the other hand, the Administration cannot be relied on to give its support automatically, and for this reason chiefs and lieutenants may decide to act without reference to it. The Administration has even on occasion awarded damages to a commoner against the Paramount Chief.

It is perhaps significant that a minor chief whose county contained a comparatively large number of villages from the segments of other counties and whose claims to the county chieftainship was disputed decided to hold a meeting to discuss county affairs not at his court or at his village but at the capital of the county. He may have hoped to quell dissension by emphasizing the links with the pre-conquest past shared by the majority of his people.

Now that chiefs and others have begun building in burnt brick, it may be that newly acceded chiefs may not find it so easy to found their own villages. At the same time the policy of building other public buildings in brick, such as treasuries and the proposed welfare halls, in the vicinity of existing courts, may give increased importance to the Native Authority centre. Already there have been one or two attempts at opening shops near the courts to cater for the needs of litigants, and it seems likely that the effective social centre of the county will in future be the site of the Native Authority rather than the capital village or the home of the chief.

8. *Politics and the courts*

The day-to-day work of the court takes up much of the time of chiefs, assessors, and senior lieutenants of the chief. General discussion of Ngoni law lies outside the particular theme of this book, but we are here concerned with the courts in so far as they form part of the political system of the tribe. That there is a close connexion

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

175 ten units of different orders of segmentation in the old system and are
648 now regarded as ten homologous territorial segments in the new.
631 Thus one village founded for a group of queens by Mpezeni I has given rise to two royal chieftainships, another to one royal chieftainship, and a third to a royal chieftainship and a non-royal one. On the other hand, there is no chieftainship corresponding to the son of Mpezeni I who was next in succession to the main heir.

621 There are royal villages in every county. The oldest royal village
634 in a county is now the capital of the county, and the lieutenants in the capital are responsible to the county chief. The minor chiefs have
178 continued the process of making new villages for their queens, so that in each county the chief lives in a recently formed royal village, founded either by himself or by his father, and not in his capital. The capital is often the biggest village in the county, while the chief's village is more frequently quite small. It is the name of the capital village rather than that of the chief's village that serves as the name of the county itself. Thus, while in the old days the national capital changed with each new Paramount, the county capitals do not alter. The new royal villages founded since 1898 have not the same importance in the political structure as had the pre-conquest royal villages. This change is reflected in the fact that there is now no real national capital in the old sense.

692 Disputes in the old days were settled in the village by the head-
[622] man, or were taken to the regional governor, or to the lieutenants of the royal village, for settlement. If the matter could not be settled there it was taken to the assembly of the senior lieutenants of Mpezeni, whose decision could be set aside only by Mpezeni himself. Now each chief has a court, and there is an appeal court on which representatives from each of the ten counties sit in turn. In the old
647 days important decisions were taken by the senior lieutenants, in consultation with Mpezeni, although the four large royal villages were to
[721] some extent independent of one another. Sections of the army, for instance, appear to have been sent out on raids from a royal village without reference to the Paramount.[1] Under the present régime
[648] meetings of the tribe as a whole are held at Mcumo, a centre established by the Administration at which there is a school and a dispensary. These are attended by the chiefs and such people as choose to come. These meetings are usually sponsored by the Administration, and meetings to discuss affairs that arise independently of the Administration are

[1] Cf. Cunha, *A Trip to Mpezeni's*, p. 1.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

643 wait for six or seven years before the procrastinating headmen
[645] could lay aside jealousies, and actually place him in the authority of his father. Then when he is crowned he cannot sit in judgment
[697] or give a decision unless his councillors have been summoned, and have deliberated with him. Many a time in the old fierce days the councillors and chief argued and defied one another for weeks at a time over the question as to whether the white man was to be tolerated in the country, and it was the strong affection of old Mombera for Dr. Laws, and Wm. Koyi which alone held in the dogs of war, and prevented his councillors from going forth on an exterminating expedition. Yet in spite of the great power of the chief he lives as father of the people with all the villagers as his children. His house is like their own, built right in the centre of
[567] the village. The poorest slave has access to him, and he hands his beer pot or his snuff to the meanest villager when he would show him friendliness.

[622] Under the paramount chief there are four great sub-chiefs, and
[634] each of them has his councillors and headmen. Then these headmen have each a group of villages under their control. They
[692] hear and dispose of petty quarrels between the villagers. Cases in which headmen are involved go to the sub-chief, and cases in which the sub-chiefs are involved, and all great tribal affairs,
645 go to the paramount chief. The tribal council is an impressive sight. Just before I came here I had the privilege of being present in one of these great gatherings of the tribe. It had met to discuss the advisability of coming under the British Protectorate. The great chief, Chimtunga, had sent out his messengers to call to council all the sub-chiefs and headmen. They marched into the
[634] chief's kraal on the appointed day, each sub-chief followed by his councillors and hundreds of armed warriors, all walking in single file, and dressed in their gaudiest clothes. They sat round the
[643] kraal till thousands were present. By-and-bye the paramount chief walked in, followed by his brothers and council. He was greeted by a roar of salutation, and took his seat. When the case was opened, and the subject introduced, the fathers of the people rose one after the other and saluted the chief, and then addressed the people. The speakers walked up and down, speaking with
[537] considerable incisiveness and eloquence, their language full of metaphors and traditional allusions. Then the chief spoke, closing the discussion. Immediately it was ended and the royal
[535] salutation given, a warrior leapt into the circle with a war cry, fell

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

787 rising out of the lake, this was the spirit of the fathers returned.
[177] Now they had never heard before of men with white skins. But one day when they were burning the Henga villages, suddenly they came on David Livingstone and his party on their first journey of exploration on the Lake. More than once I have heard them tell how this wicked hag had cursed her enemy and said that beneath that tree the lightning would strike her, or some other terrible prediction, and there came a strange fulfilment.
795 Such curious accidents gave to witch-doctors and others a
791 dangerous power over the people. And in spite of their constant failure to bring rain, or ward off sickness and death, their reputation was kept alive by the memory of one or two ancien successes, and by playing on the terrors of the people. Unfortunately these superstitious terrors led to miserable atrocities.
695 The witch-doctor was always called in to detect crime which was not patent. He brought his poison pot with him. He might accuse whom he pleased, and the only way the accused could clear himself was by drinking the poison. If he became sick and vomited then he was innocent. If he died he was guilty. When
766 a chief died his spirit was not allowed to go to the other world alone. A great fight was organised and many were killed, that they might be with him. Or the women and slaves were taken and buried alive with him in the pit.

845 The twin children and those who cut their upper teeth before
849 their lower, or any who showed any abnormality were buried alive in the sand of the river, or were cast out to the hyenas.

These atrocities are happily becoming matters of history. We
177 seldom now hear of them, and when we do, it sends a thrill of horror through many of the people.

Now a great change is coming over the people. They are the
[643] only independent tribe is Central Africa, living under their own chiefs. But the old military days have passed away, and with them much of the great power of the chiefs. The old men see it, and shake their heads, but do nothing to readjust the state. But the young chiefs, most of whom are readers and Christians, have set themselves energetically to try and remould their government.
[634] Our most capable and powerful sub-chief, who is himself an elder of the church has recently established a regular hut tax, and has formed a police force. His police bring criminals to justice, enforce his judgments, prohibit the people from cutting down trees, and during slack seasons go through the villages, and where

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

they find dirt and untidiness compel the people to turn out and sweep the village, and rebuild their houses.

Education is spreading at a great rate, and there are fifty schools already established among the people with about 7,000 scholars in attendance. These pay fees for their attendance. And so great is the thirst for reading that last year more than 4,000 volumes were bought by the people.

A Christian church is rapidly growing up, and at certain religious seasons a great congregation of over 7,000 people may be seen gathered from all quarters.

Yet it would be a pity if with this inrush of new life the old tribal characteristics were lost in a wretched caricature of European methods. There is nothing more slovenly than a lithe athletic African dressed in European cast off clothing, or more repulsive than a lad trying to be an Englishman when he should be an Ngoni proud of his nationality. And this is one of the most serious problems that is constantly before us, to guide this people in their formative period, that in the end they may not be denationalised, and made hideous and ridiculous in a distorted and unnatural mould, to preserve all national customs which are not evil in themselves and yet evolve a people honest, industrous, intelligent, and Christian, who will have some harmonious and beautiful part to take when the world's orchestra is filling up to play its symphony of peace and prosperity.